WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE WORLD OF ART

SEVERAL times recently I have had occasion to recommend the reading of Kenyon Cox's critical study of the art of Winslow Homer (privately printed by Frederick Fairchild Sherman), and so it occurred to me it was high time that I should read this work for myself.

This devoir I have now accomplished.

My recommendations, of course, had not been blind ones. I had read attractive chapters from the essay as they appeared in Dr. Willy Valentiner's magazine, *Art in America*, to which as I read I occasionally objected, but more often delightedly acquiesced. The reader who gets both pleasure and pain from a critical production is having a good time. It should be the aim of criticism to supply both. The review that is swallowed whole and digested unconsciously has either been read by an imbecile or is poor stuff in the way of criticism. The good writer and the good reader are almost upon equal terms, as Emerson pointed out.

My disagreements with Mr. Cox, the writer, are not serious and will only be mentioned by way of honesty and after the more important acquiescences have been dilated upon. I was not inflamed by any of Mr. Cox's conclusions into the violently eruptive state of a Nietzsche (more's the pity!), who said such emphatic "Noes" to a comparatively obscure book that he felt afterward obliged to write his "Genealogy of Morals," in which the title of this obscure little book is brilliantly enbalmed for some time to come.

Nor was I aroused even to the furious pitch attained by the mass of (now philistinic) Balzac worshippers who so foamed during the past summer at the free analysis of that master by Emile Faguet that they almost forgot their terrors of the war raging about them in the annoyance of realizing that a critic had looked at the great one with a glance that was on the level; and I believe the presses are hot at this very moment with their books in refutation.

No, on the central point of Winslow Homer's greatness Mr. Cox and his present reviews agree so thoroughly that nothing else matters. What are a few trifling differences of opinion between friends? Oh, you take it that way; I take it this way. I look at the picture again with renewed interest, trying to love the imaginary line between the berrypicker's hat and the canary bird to which Mr. Cox calls my attention, and if I cannot rise to his enthusiasm for this particular line the fact remains that we both love the "Berrypickers" enormously. And that's the main thing.

Then, too, Mr. Cox writes charmingly simple English. It is limpid and clear, like the water in Winslow Homer's mountain brooks. His style is quite as good as any that the best young English writers of the day, who, like Borrow, have gone back in their search for directness of utterance, to the manner of De Foe; and for that reason I felt quite proud when certain copies were despatched abroad for reviewing purposes. It is just as well that these young Englishmen should know the sort of work that some of us are doing over here. But the review in the *Burlington Magazine* has just reached me. * * * It is disgustingly short. * * * I feel quite piqued at the *Burlington*. * * * But of this more anon.

"So far as we can judge by his effect upon us, his contemporaries," writes Mr. Cox, "and without waiting for the verdict of posterity, Winslow Homer was unquestionably a great artist. He has given us pleasures and sensations different in kind from those which we have received from other artists of his time, and perhaps superior to them in degree. He has shown us things which without his eyes we should not have seen and impressed us with truths which but for him we should not have felt.

"He has stirred us with tragic emotion or, in the representation of common, everyday incidents, has revealed to us the innate nobility of the simple and hardy lives of hunters, fishers and seafarers. Finally he has realized for us as no other artist of any time has done the power and the grandeur of the elemental forces of nature, and has dramatized for us the conflict of water, earth and air. His genius has been felt alike by artist, by critic and by layman, and it has been acknowledged almost as fully by that contemporary posterity, intelligent foreign opinion, as by the universal assent of his countrymen."

Reader, is not that fine? You were convinced already, but you like this noble enthusiasm and are swept along by it. But here is something even better in the way of style:

"For, surely, no greatly successful artist ever had less care than Homer for those decorative and æsthetic qualities which Whistler proclaimed, in theory and by his practice, the whole of art. * * * His pictures will not hang comfortably on a wall or invite you discreetly to the contemplation of gradually unfolding beauties. They speak with the voice of a trumpet, and whether they exhilarate or annoy you you cannot neglect them. They have none of the amenities of the drawing room, and you might almost as well let the sea itself into your house as one of Homer's transcripts of it."

With that last apt sentence instantly the famous "Northeaster" or some other of Homer's great sea pieces leap to the mind. It is a pity Mr. Cox did not attempt a lengthier description of these "sea dramas," as he rightly calls them, for they are the greatest sea pictures in the world, and Turner's and Claude's are but intellectual performances in comparison. He makes a mistake too in thinking Homer's color so negligible that these marines are almost as effective in the photographic reproduction. They are decidedly not "readable" in any reproductions yet made, and to get Homer one must emphatically see the originals, as the *Burlington* reviewer pathetically says.

Everything that Homer touched betrayed his genius, and there is sure to be a thrill somewhere even in his slightest pencil drawing, but there can be no doubt that the great "surf and rock" series will become increasingly important as time goes on and will finally crystallize in the public mind as Homer's typical achievement. So completely submissive have Mr. Cox and I, and all good Americans in fact, become to the Homer legend that we refuse to believe that as the painter of the supreme forces of the sea he shall ever be superseded. It is impossible for Jobs and William Blakes and Homers to be born twice. Mr. Cox has a real gift for the description of pictures (it's a much more difficult task than is generally supposed, as the present writer, who hasn't it at all, can humbly certify), and his few but excellent descriptions in the present book lead one to believe that he might have done more in that way for the sea dramas.

This does the "Moon Kiss" very well:

"Every one has seen the moon rise at sunset, and many men must have seen the figures in a boat when the boat itself was hidden in the trough of the sea. If any painter saw it before Homer painted his 'Kissing the Moon' he assuredly thought the subject impossible. Homer admits no impossibilities; and having seen it he painted it, the three heads red against the gray green sea, and the moon, like a fourth in the group, only a touch and a sweep of light on the shaft of an oar to indicate that there is anything to support these solid figures in their strange position. You gasp once at the unexpectedness of the impression and then accept it as obvious truth."

Or this for the "Fog Warning":

"Here is a halibut fisher rowing in with his catch, and as his dory rises on the back of the long wave looking over his shoulder to make sure of the direction of the schooner to which he is returning. Nothing could be simpler than the attitude of the man rowing steadily and easily, and there is no suggestion of tempest or wreck in this dark sea, barely breaking into a whitecap here and there under the influence of a fresh breeze. But across the horizon lies a long bank of fog, and from it rise diagonally two or three ragged streamers, which show that it is beginning to move toward us. It is enough, and one is as conscious of the most insidious and deadly of the fisherman's perils as of the matter of course way in which it is met as a part of the day's work."

It is a matter for regret, as I said before, that our writer did not make similarly eloquent appreciations of the "Northeaster," the "Gulf Stream" and the other epics, to give further value to this essay of his. Had he risen to them as Pater rose to the Mona Lisa there was the chance to write the Cox name against the Homer picture frame for all time. In the meantime we may be thankful that he has done as much for us as he has.

Mr. Cox saves up his most brilliant writing for the final chapter, where in rhapsodizing about the water colors he becomes quite lyrical. The following passage almost dominates the book:

"If from the first he painted better in water colors than he was ever able to do in oils it may be said that in the end he painted better in water colors—with more virtuosity of hand, more sense of the right use of material, more decisive in mastery of its proper resources—than almost any modern has been able to do in oils. One must go back to Rubens or Hals for a parallel in oil painting to Homer's prodigious skill in water color, and perhaps to the Venetian, for anything so perfectly right in its technical manner. His felicity and rapidity of handling is a delight, and to see the way, for instance, in which all the complicated forms and foreshortenings of the head of a palm tree are given in a few instantaneous touches, each touch of a shape one would hardly have thought of, yet each indisputably right in character, is to have a new revelation of the magical power of sheer workmanship."

This and the attendant and just observations upon the correct use of water color as a medium almost prepare one to find Mr. Cox adopting the fashionable opinion of the day, which is so thrilled by this perfection of workmanship in the Homer water colors that it is quite willing to ignore the paintings in oil. But Mr. Cox's second and soberer thought is wiser. He says: "It is, however, a matter of very little importance whether we like better Homer's water colors or his oil paintings, since it is the same man who produced both. And, indeed, the difference between his performance in the two mediums is a difference of degree rather than of kind—a difference of relative emphasis only—the whole Homer being after all necessary to account for anything he did."

Since this is written upon the final page it must be the final thought, so we may all say "Amen" to it.

These reversals, not of opinion but of plan, mar Mr. Cox's essay throughout and explain, no doubt, the coolness of the English reviewer who after reading Mr. Cox's "well considered memoir" still doubtingly insists that he must see the pictures before he will believe.

There is one interesting chapter in which Homer's own belief that he was a simple realist and nothing more is indicated at such length that you think Mr. Cox concurs implicitly in the artist's mistaken opinion of himself. You turn the page and the new chapter begins, "It is of course quite impossible to accept such an estimate as final"; and Homer is rightly hailed as an interpretive artist. But you can see how an Englishman would get confused in such a maze of reasoning.

The book is printed in a limited edition. It is valuable because of its enthusiasm. I wish so much enthusiasm about Homer might be presented to a wider public; and yet I should hesitate to toss Mr. Cox's essay to the school children. With all its good matter it contains much that is pernicious.

Mr. Cox being a workman himself as well as a writer enlarges too much upon workmanship, and if he were right mere workmanship would be the whole of art. Unfortunately for the value of Mr. Cox's book, however, it is not.

Mr. Cox is shocked by the fact that Homer turned his back upon the school instructors and as artist "just grew," like Topsy. Numbers of times he tries to explain the emotions roused in him by Homer in hard and mechanical fashion. Listen to this:

"In this mastery of design we have, undoubtedly, that which gives Homer his authoritative and magisterial utterance; that which constitutes him a creator; that which transforms him from an acute observer and a brilliant reporter into a great and original artist. A poor technician, an unequal colorist, a powerful but untrained draughtsman; his faults almost overbear his merits were he not a designer of the first rank. Because he is a designer of the first rank he is fairly certain to be permanently reckoned a master."

What rot! One would be tempted to call it criminal were it not so evident that Mr. Cox has written in all innocence, quite unaware of the enormity he has committed. You see all over this proclamation the dry as dust professor explaining the beauties of the Venus de Milo with the aid of a pair of calipers. One might just as well say Shakespeare was great because he was an excellent grammarian.

Homer designed well of course. He also drew better and colored better than Mr. Cox thinks, for since he aroused his audience to the primeval terrors by these means it is clear he perfectly expressed himself, expression being the chief end of art and not skill in mechanics.

ART NEWS AND COMMENT.

"I HAVE just been asked to recommend an American to do a portrait for a certain institution," said John Oakman, the architect, at a recent luncheon, "and I should like them to have a portrait that besides being a likeness will have some good painting in it. Whom would you suggest?"

There was a moment or two of embarrassed silence. Then each of us presented in turn our candidates for this enticing job, but there were reproving cries of "Oh!" at each name.

My own list was received with especial disapprobation. "You call yourself a man of taste," said some one, "and you think those four artists you name great!"

"I didn't say they were great, but they are the best we've got. If you don't like them, why not try a foreigner. Zorn is still living and doesn't object to painting Americans. You might get him.

"No, it must be an American," insisted Oakman.

"There was a Norwegian who showed some portraits here last spring that were rather freely painted. Perhaps he's an American by this time."

"Oh, you mean my friend Lund," cried Henry Reuterdahl. "He wouldn't do. He's dashed artistic, but he doesn't get the likeness. He painted a portrait of my wife and if you were to give it to the police and tell them to look for her, by Jove, they'd never find her."

"Such a use of the picture wouldn't have occurred to me," returned Oakman, deeply interested. "I should think portraits like that might have a great vogue."

The sculptures of Paul Manship aroused Chicago to unusual enthusiasm when exhibited at the Art Institute recently. They are now meeting with equal success in the Albright Gallery of Buffalo. Mr. Manship cannot complain of lack of appreciation by his contemporaries.

Witness the eloquence of Miss Evelyn Marie Stuart in the *Fine Arts Journal* of October:

"Turning from these to a portrait of a baby three weeks old we are amazed at the fidelity and variety of this man's genius, for here is realism that is awesome. The age of the child is written in every line and curve, the elusive roundness and soft depression of tissue too young to be styled muscle.

"The little face has that eerie, old as time look, which in the faces of the new born reminds us how

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting.
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath elsewhere had its setting,
And cometh from afar.

"This babe is indeed as old as the universe, for the personality of this world has not yet dawned in its eyes and it stands as the eternal symbol of life. The little hands too are, oh, so new born, so weak, yet perfectly moulded, so curiously creased and wrinkled like flower petals but recently unfolded, and the little round body, even under the swaddling clothes, is infantile to the last degree. The tinting of the plaster has added to the lifelike effect until the little portrait is all but living."

Of Robert Henri's very different art, shown in the institute at the same time, Miss Stuart writes:

"The first impression of the Robert Henri exhibition was one of brilliant color and of questionable society. 'Why,' insisted the literal mind, ever in search of prettiness, 'should genius expend itself upon these uncomely, uncombed, unwashed and unregenerate people—Chinese, gypsies, Mexicans, Indians, garlic reeking laborers and the like?'

"The question, however, proved illuminating, as one turned the matter over, not upon the artist's point of view so much as upon the questioner's. It brought with it that shock which a well bred Christian experiences upon the sudden realization that his conception of the brotherhood of man does not involve a speaking acquaintance with those not of his set, and that down in his secret heart he scarcely concedes to the less elegant and enlightened element of society a right to exist, except as unavoidable misfortunes."

The monumental de luxe catalogue of the fine arts department of the Panama-Pacific Exposition is now in press and it is expected to surpass all previous efforts in the way of exposition art catalogues.

Miss Helen Wright of the Congressional Library at Washington, D. C., has had charge of the enormous mass of biographical data for this work. Only American artists are given biographical treatment, as to have given all the foreign artists would have swollen the volume to the dimensions of a vast dictionary and would have required more time than it was possible to give.

Some idea of the extent of the task may be gained when it is known that there are more than 3,000 names in the index of exhibition artists which the volume includes. For many months old newspaper files and old books were ransacked for biographical material relating to the older schools of American artists. Memoirs, histories, contemporary records of many sorts were consulted, with the result that for the first time a comprehensive biographical index of essential facts dealing with the entire history of our native art is made accessible.

There are about 900 pages in the work, which will probably be issued in two volumes, on the very finest paper procurable and with the typography expressing the last degree of perfection in the printer's craft. There will be 144 illustrations of the most remarkable and memorable works exhibited and 150 pages of critical text, divided into thirty chapters.

John E. D. Trask contributes the introduction and also a chapter on the art of Argentina, with which he has an especially intimate knowledge, due to his having been detailed by the United States Government as its commissioner-general to the universal exposition of art in Buenos Ayres in 1910. Chief of the department of fine arts at the present exposition, secretary and manager of the famous Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts from 1905 to 1913, and connected officially with other international exhibitions, Mr. Trask's competency to deal broadly with a survey of world art is unexcelled.

Leonce Benedite, the director of the National Museum of the Luxembourg and author of works on Manet, Whistler and modern French art, one of the best known art writers in the world, is the author of the chapter on French art. As the French exhibition both on retrospective and of contemporary art is one of the most striking and unquestionably successful departments of the exhibition, this chapter is of primary importance.

Florence Wheelock Ayscough of Shanghai, China, writes the chapter dealing with Chinese art. Honorary secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society, a director of the Asiatic Museum of Shanghai and of the International Institute of the same city, she is a recognized authority on her subject.

So also is the writer of the chapter dealing with a form of art more fantastic and less understandable to most people than the most exotic Orientalism, namely, Futurism. Umberto Boccioni of Milan, Italy, himself a foremost painter and sculptor and lecturer on Futurist art, and a member of the original group of the initiators of Italian Futurism, contributes a chapter in which he expresses his reasons for being ultra-modern.

Japan's marvellous art is dealt with by H. Shuglo, Commissioner of Fine Arts to the exposition and holder of an unquestioned place of authority. He has represented his country at many international exhibitions, is a member of the board of directors of the Japan Fine Arts Association of Tokio and several other leading art societies.

Dr. Gregory Boloni, Budapest, Hungary, author of "Modern Hungarian Art" and a foremost art writer in his own country, with a widespread reputation in Europe, deals with the extremely interesting and important art of Hungary, which is represented at San Francisco by the most complete retrospective section of any foreign nation and in its contemporary display takes a place among the countries whose art strikes the most virile and initiative notes, such countries as Norway and Sweden and France.

Dr. Leon M. Guerrero of Manila deals with the art of the Philippines. He is president of the Philippine board to the Panama-Pacific Exposition and in many ways one of the most distinguished men his country has produced.

The other chapters of the book are handled by J. Nilsen Laurvik, coeditor with Mr. Trask, and Robert B. Harshe, the assistant chief of the department of fine arts.

Mr. Laurvik has written the main portion of the critical material, contributing seventeen chapters dealing with various aspects of the exhibition, together with a final chapter on new tendencies in art. Save for graphic art, which Mr. Harshe treats, Mr. Laurvik's work constitutes a complete critical study of American art, retrospective and contemporary, together with chapters on the art of Holland, Italy, Norway, Sweden and of Axel Gallen-Kallela, the powerful Finnish genius, to whom a large separate gallery is allotted. In the chapters dealing with American art, besides three main studies which treat of American portrait and figure painters, landscape painters and sculptors, there are individual studies concerned with such Americans as Whistler, Chase, Duveneck, Melchers, Sargent, Redfield, Tarbell, Twachtman and Hassam.

Jules Pascin, who belongs when in Paris to the Cafe du Dom group of painters and who has been in this country since the outbreak of the war, cannot now return to the Dom until hostilities cease, as he owes allegiance to the Bulgarian Government.

Mr. Pascin spent most of last winter and the early part of the past summer in the South, studying in his peculiarly biting, disturbing manner certain elements in the life of Tampa and Havana. Those at all familiar with Mr. Pascin's style will instantly jump with interest at the expectation of seeing what he got from communities that seem almost to have been made for him.

To the few who are aware of Mr. Pascin's great and rare talent it will be almost unnecessary to report that the conventional "nigger," the conventional Southern "mammy" and the lovely fan still conventional young ladies sitting upon the Charleston doorsteps are conspicuously absent from the drawings that bulge the recently arrived portfolios.

Mr. Pascin doesn't avoid the conventional; he is simply unaware of it. Like our Lafcadio Hearn, he is in love with the strange, with the hitherto unreported, and as he is an artist when it comes to using his facts the citizens of Tampa, I mean of course the leading citizens, unless they are more sensitive to modern art than I suspect, will revolt as hotly against the picture that Mr. Pascin holds up as did the citizens of Dublin at the first appearance of "The Playboy of the Western World." Were one to place on public view in Tampa Mr. Pascin's entire Tampa series of water colors I am persuaded that the entire police force of that city would be required to defend them.

Yet I who have seen them admire them immensely. I feel that they are true to Tampan life as I have always dreamed it. I know that they conform to life in general, and although life in Tampa may be caviar to the general it must (and now we're upon solid ground once more) conform to the general.

Everybody sits both in Tampa and in Cuba, according to Mr. Pascin. He apologizes for the way the darkies festoon the porches of their shanties and for the almost horizontal attitudes of the men who ride in the picturesque calèches. He said he would have enjoyed doing them in the perpendicular, but he so seldom saw them that way.

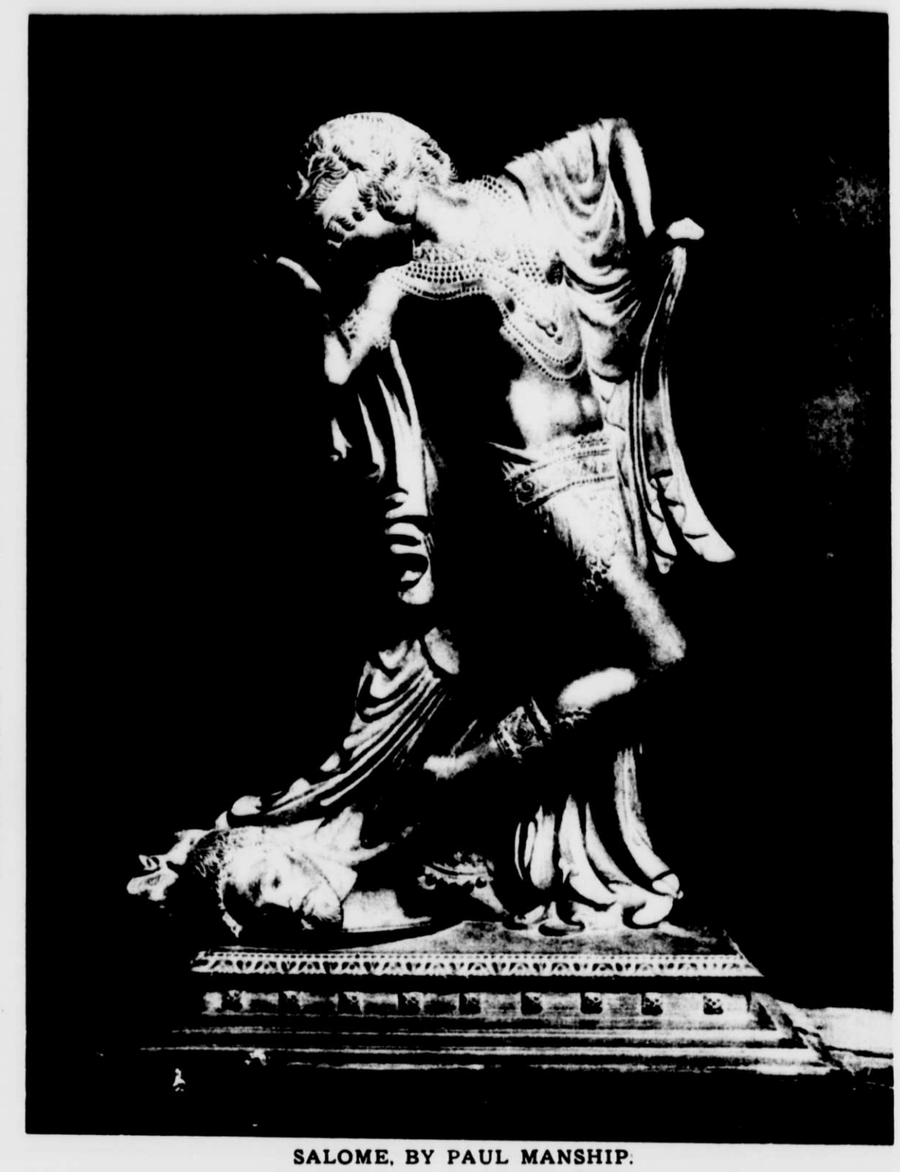
One of his most fascinating drawings is of the assembly of darkies waiting their turn outside the jail to visit relatives stopping inside. This is regarded as a gala occasion down there, Mr. Pascin says, and the negroes dress for it in their Sunday best, and squeeze out of it every ounce of importance and interest that the event can be made to contain.

The demand to see the Newark Poster Show at the Free Public Library has been so great that the committee in charge of the exhibit has decided to continue the display until the first week in November, thereby affording the citizens of Newark a further opportunity to view this exceptional collection of artistic posters.

The exhibit set in New York city at the Anderson Galleries for October 26 has been accordingly postponed to the second week in November.

An artistic illustrated catalogue is now being prepared by John Cotton Dana and the committee's executives. These catalogues will accompany the posters to all cities where they are exhibited.

The Minneapolis Institute of Arts is holding an exhibition of water colors by the English artist Charles John Collings. These water colors, said by a writer in the museum's bulletin to be exquisite and characterized by great beauty of color and design, have been lent from their private collections by James McDiarmid, C. H. Enderton and Fletcher Andrews of Winnipeg. This is the first exhibition in America of Mr. Collings's work. He is an Englishman who since 1910 has lived in Canada. The great majority of his subjects are drawn from the lofty mountain scenery near his home at Seymour Arms, Shuswap Lake, B. C.



SALOME, BY PAUL MANSHIP.
On exhibition at the Albright Gallery.

DETAIL OF RELIEF, BY PAUL MANSHIP.
On exhibition at the Albright Gallery.

COCK IN A BAMBOO GROVE, MING DYNASTY.
In A. W. Bahr's collection in the Montross Gallery.

PORTRAIT OF A NOBLEMAN, MING DYNASTY.
In A. W. Bahr's collection in the Montross Gallery.